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INTENDED PRODUCTION OF TURKEYS IN 1939

U. S. Turkey producers are planning large increases in the number of turkeys to be raised this year, according to early February returns to the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. Reports from more than 4,000 producers who bought or hatched 2,750,000 poults in 1938 show that big increases are intended in all major regions of the country. If the indicated increases should be realized, turkey producers in the United States would hatch or buy about 27 percent more turkey poults in 1939 than in 1938. The actual percent of increase in turkeys raised, however, will probably be less than that figure. Last year producers reported an expected increase of poults of about 6 percent, whereas the increase in turkeys raised seems to have been only about 2 percent. A record gain of 35 percent was made in 1936.

The reported number of turkey poults that producers intend to obtain from commercial hatcheries shows a 34 percent increase over purchases last year. Intended purchases of poults show large increases in all areas, being up 27 percent in the North Atlantic and Far Western regions and 33 to 38 percent in the other major regions.

An increase of 22 percent in home hatched poults is expected. The returns for these show wider variations between regions than do those for purchased poults, but they also show gains for all major regions. These reported increases range from 12 percent in the South Atlantic to 33 percent in the North Atlantic region, increases in all other regions being between 18 and 25 percent.

As this is only the second annual intentions report for turkeys, it is impossible to judge to what extent performance may fall below these reported intentions. Large flocks which for several years have been rapidly increasing in number and expanding in size are more fully represented in the returns than are the small farm flocks and this probably tends to make the reported increase somewhat too high. During most recent years the number of small flocks has tended to decline, offsetting to some extent the gain in large flocks. This year there appears to be but little decline in the number of small flocks and gains in intended numbers are shown for these as well as for large flocks.

The extent of the increase in the number of turkeys raised this year will depend upon several factors, particularly the weather, the supply of suitable eggs for hatching, the ability of hatcheries to meet the expanding demand for poults, and finally, upon further consideration by producers of the possibility that the supply of turkeys this year might be in excess of the market demand at satisfactory prices. While these and other factors are expected to result in smaller increases than shown by the intention reports, a considerable increase in production seems assured. Prices received for the 1938 crop of turkeys were high in relation to feed costs. Returns from the 1937 crop also were fairly good in most sections though not in all. Following two generally satisfactory years, producers seem inclined to expand production sharply and many who produced no turkeys in 1938 are planning to raise some this year.

The number of turkey hens reported on hand February 1, shows an increase of 15 percent over numbers last year. A gain is indicated for every major geographic area, with increases of 10 percent in the Far West, 14 percent in the North Atlantic region, and about 20 percent elsewhere.



The mortality of young turkeys in 1938 is reported at approximately 21 percent of the total number of poults bought, custom hatched and home hatched in that year. The loss of turkey hens for the country as a whole was apparently close to 9 percent of the number on hand last year. The smallest loss of young turkeys was 14 percent in the North Atlantic region and highest was 36 percent in the South Central group of States. The reported mortality of breeding stock ranged from a low average of about 5 percent in the Far West up to 18 percent in the South Central region.

INTENDED TURKEY PRODUCTION IN 1939
Growers' Intentions as Reported on February 1, 1939

Geographic areas	:	:	:	Numbers in 1939 as a percentage			
	: Estimated :	:	:	of numbers in 1938 1/			
	: percent of:	:	:	: Hatchery :	Home :	Hatchery	
	: U.S. total: Number :	: Turkey hens: poults to:	: on hand :	: be bought: poults for:	: raising :	and home	
	: production: of flocks :	: on hand :	: Feb. 1 :	: for rais-: raising :	: poults :	hatched	
	: of turkeys: reported :	: Feb. 1 :	: for rais-: raising :	: ing 2/ :	: combined :		
	: in 1938 :	:	:	:	:		
	Percent :	Number :	Percent :	Percent :	Percent :	Percent :	
North Atlantic	6.4 :	447 :	114 :	127 :	133 :	130 :	
East No. Central	10.5 :	629 :	122 :	133 :	121 :	127 :	
West No. Central	30.3 :	1,178 :	119 :	135 :	125 :	131 :	
South Atlantic	8.2 :	446 :	119 :	134 :	112 :	121 :	
South Central	22.1 :	779 :	120 :	138 :	120 :	124 :	
Western	22.5 :	587 :	110 :	127 :	118 :	123 :	
United States	100.0 :	4,066 :	115 :	134 :	122 :	127 :	

- 1/ Exclusive of poults being hatched by growers for sale as baby poults to other growers.
2/ Including poults "custom hatched" for a fee from eggs supplied by the grower.

Geographic areas	:	Mortality of Turkeys in 1938	
	:	: Young turkeys lost as :	: Breeding stock lost
	:	: a percentage of total :	: as a percentage of
	:	: numbers bought and :	: February 1 num-
	:	: home hatched in 1938 :	: bers of hens
	:	Percent :	Percent
North Atlantic	:	14 :	12
East No. Central	:	21 :	12
West No. Central	:	20 :	11
South Atlantic	:	30 :	15
South Central	:	36 :	18
Western	:	20 :	5
United States	:	21 :	9

Reports received from 67 hatcheries in connection with this inquiry showed an increase of 33 percent in the number of turkey hens on hand in their own flocks on February 1 this year over last, and an increase of 68 percent in their expected sales of turkey poults in 1939 compared with 1938.